Emily Cranfill, Senior Account Manager
Indiana Department of Administration
Procurement Division
402 W. Washington St., Room W468
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

RE: RFP 21-2422 Item Bank and Authoring System

November 5, 2020

Dear Ms. Cranfill,

Today, we are facing an unprecedented state of crisis with COVID-19 impacting our personal and professional lives—but even more—the impact on our students and learners is profound and unwavering. At this time, more than ever, we need to emphasize the importance of focusing educational resources on student support and wellbeing. This includes measuring student performance and supporting improved student outcomes. Through these unusual circumstances, and as we hopefully anticipate a return to more normal times, Pearson remains deeply and personally committed to continue our partnership with Indiana Department of Education (IDOE).

NCS Pearson, Inc., through its School Assessment division, is excited to submit this response to the Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) to provide an Item Bank and Authoring System. In our proposal we outline a straightforward plan for a dependable, high-quality item and authoring system—ABBI (Assessment Banking and Building for Interoperability).

The plan presented in this proposal is based on more than two decades of experience in successfully transitioning state programs like IDOE's to our authoring and item banking platforms.

In accordance with the RFP's instructions (Section 2.2), we provide the required information on the pages below.

2.2.1 Agreement with Requirement listed in Section 1

Pearson acknowledges its understanding of the General Information presented in Section One of RFP 21-2422. The following figure illustrates our compliance with IDOA's Summary Scope of Work requirements listed in Section 1.4 of the RFP.

Summary Scope of Work Requirements		
The selected solution(s) must:	**Compliance**	**Response Location**
Adhere to the Question and Test Interoperability (QTI) and Accessible Portable Item Protocol (APIP) standards, including any IMS Global Learning Consortium certifications (https://www.imsglobal.org/activity/qtiapip).	Yes	Technical Proposal 2.4.2

Summary Scope of Work Requirements		
The selected solution(s) must:	**Compliance**	**Response Location**
Support the development of new items. This includes, but is not limited to the following: • Vendor will provide training and ongoing support to IDOE staff regarding the utilization and access of all system features. • Vendor will provide a manual that describes the process of authoring each item type into the system.	Yes	Technical Proposal 2.4.3 2.4.4 2.4.6
Allow for the delivery of secure items into the selected system and export of the items to outside vendors for development and deployment. • Vendor will import all items into the selected solution. • Vendor will ensure all content displays accurately and metadata fields are populated correctly. • Vendor will export all newly developed items to an outside vendor as necessary. This is anticipated to be an annual delivery, and timelines for this work will be mutually agreed upon between the selected vendor, testing vendor, and IDOE.	Yes	Technical Proposal 2.4.12
Ensure all content is kept secure following the State's guidelines for data at rest and in transition. The Indiana Information Security Framework will be followed to the extent possible: https://www.in.gov/iot_credential/information-security-framework/.	Yes	Technical Proposal 2.4.13 2.4.14
Maintain Indiana-owned items as an item repository for all test content owned by the state.	Yes	Technical Proposal 2.4.13
Include security features to allow only approved users to access the Indiana items in the product.	Yes	Technical Proposal 2.4.5

2.2.2 Summary of Ability and Desire to Supply the Required Products or Services

Our proposal addresses each of the requirements outlined in 'Section 2.4 Technical Proposal' of this RFP.

Pearson's Capabilities

- **Partnering with Indiana.** Our team is ready to start working on Day 1. Pearson understands the importance of the direction IDOE has taken in educator-authored items for their assessments. We have partnered with IDOE for the past five years, providing a highly adaptable, dependable platform. In addition, we have successfully imported IDOE assets for ISTEP, IREAD, Indiana End-of-Course Assessment, ILEARN, and I AM.

- **Item Bank and Authoring System.** Pearson's state of the art item authoring system, ABBI, provides a single unified interface for:
  - Authoring test content and all associated content assets
  - Banking content elements and metadata
  - Building test forms
  - Publishing test forms for online and paper delivery

- **Item Types.** ABBI supports a full spectrum of item types from simple multiple-choice items to

complex technology enhanced items. All item types are enabled through easy-to-use interfaces, which allows the author to build complex functionality piece-by-piece. Online help is available at every step.

- **Training and Support.** Pearson's Application Support team leads efforts to establish processes, best practices, and strategies associated with ABBI. This team creates and delivers extensive training and professional development to employees, content development authors, and partners to maximize the potential in the tools ABBI provides. The team primarily assists asset developers, editors, and psychometricians, both internal and external to Pearson. The team's mission and training are guided by the needs of our customers.

- **Self-Help Library.** In addition to the training, Indiana writers will have access to a complete library of training materials we developed to allow for self-directed learning. The training library is divided into basic, item specific, and advanced topics to allow item writers to engage in increasingly sophisticated levels of self-growth. Along with the training library, writers will be able to access the ABBI support desk, which provides an online forum for writers to ask questions and receive answers to pressing questions not covered by the training modules.

- **QTI and APIP Standards.** All of Pearson's assessment content authoring, banking, test delivery, and scoring systems are based on the QTI and APIP standards. Pearson's guiding principles are to work within the standard's framework and document all extensions that may be used to implement innovative functionality not natively supported by the standard.

Terms and Conditions

As indicated in Section 2.3.5 of our response to RFP 21-2422 Business Proposal Attachment E, Pearson has no exceptions to the terms and conditions set forth in the RFP.

2.2.3 Signature of Authorized Representative

I affirm that I, Lisa Lepic, Senior Vice President of Pearson Assessments, am authorized to commit NCS Pearson, Inc. to the representations contained in this proposal, subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the RFP including, but not limited to, the State's mandatory contract clauses, and that our proposal meets all general conditions including the information requested in RFP Section 2.3.4. This authorization is documented in the "Secretary's Certificate of Authority," which is included per Requirement 2.3.8, at the end of the Business Proposal.

Your principle contact for this engagement will be Ms. Cynthia Galindo. Her contact information is as follows:

Cynthia Galindo
Mobile: 787.384.5512
Email: Cynthia.Galindo@Pearson.com

2.2.4 Respondent Notification

Pearson acknowledges and accepts this clause. As a backup to the email provided above, IDOE may also contact our general inbox: proposals@pearson.com.

2.2.5 Confidential Information

The following information is considered confidential and proprietary:

Confidential Information		
Documents/Sections	**Statutory Exception of APRA**	**How APRA Applies**
Technical Proposal Appendix 1, ABBI Training Resources • ABBI Training Agenda - Sample • ABBI User Guide – Interaction Types Overview • Asset Reviews in ABBI • User Guide Passages - Stimuli	IC 5-14-3-4(a)(4) - Trade Secret	These materials should be redacted from public disclosure because they are trade secrets of Pearson. It represents information that derives economic value by not being generally known and Pearson takes commercially reasonable steps to avoid its public dissemination. For these reasons, we request that this information be redacted from any requests for public disclosure of the contents of this RFP.

2.2.6 Other Information

Commitment to Small, Women, Minority, and Veteran Owned Firms

Pearson is committed to fulfilling Indiana's expectations for the use of minority, woman, and Indiana veteran business enterprises. Over the last two years, Pearson has partnered with 22 Indiana small, women, minority, and veteran owned firms, spending nearly $2.5 million with these businesses. For this specific engagement Pearson does not intend to use subcontractors to meet this requirement since the solution is Pearson internal technology (ABBI).

Meeting Customers' Needs in Response to COVID-19

Pearson is committed to the health and safety of both our personnel and those of our customers. As IDOE already experienced during spring 2020, we have plans in place to successfully pivot training and meetings from in-person to virtual, depending on conditions concerning the spread of COVID-19.

We believe your reviewers will agree that Pearson is your best choice to continue supporting Indiana's Item Banking and Authoring System program now and well into the future.

We value your consideration and look forward to being of greater service to IDOE.

Sincerely,

Lisa Lepic
Senior Vice President, Pearson Assessments